

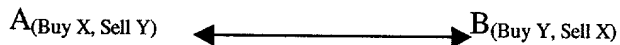
search operation can find it. The trading zone guides the user to make bids. Once the auction is complete, the rest of the transaction is done as in the case of fixed price sale.

Barter – Sell Coupon X for Coupon Y.

In this embodiment there are 2 cases: Simple (or two-party) barter and Multi-

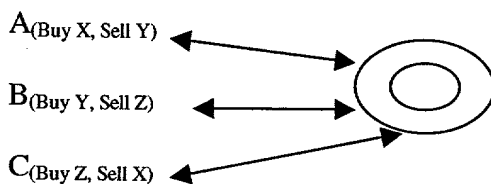
5 party barter.

Simple Barter: User A and user B agree to barter coupons.



Multi-party Barter: User A, user B and user C together can exchange coupons so

10 that they all get what they want.



The trading agent automatically executes these exchanges. No user interaction is
20 involved once a coupon is placed for barter transaction.

7 CLAIMS

We Claim:

1. Method of providing an Electronic Coupon System comprising:
2. Coupon generation, Coupon distribution, Coupon Storage, Coupon
25 Storage Management, Coupon Verification, Coupon Redemption for
cash, value or coupon and Coupon Trading.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the coupon generated is uniform,
digital and secure XML based for online and offline use.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the coupon generated is by
accepting a set of input parameters.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the generated coupons could be
in bulk or on-demand.
6. The method of claim 3, wherein the generated coupons are tracked
using a Tracking Database for later use in trading, verification and
redemption.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the tracking database is a
database of coupon parameters and coupon state.
8. The method of claim 2, wherein the distributing mechanism enables
distribution of generated coupons from a Internet Web site in a variety
of forms including, but not limited to banner ads, hyperlinks, pictures,
text, archived sets, e-mail, Or from Point of Sale Terminals at a store,
Or from any other electronic protocol or mechanism.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein the distribution mechanism may
also include a coupon Tracking database.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the tracking database is a
database of coupon parameters and coupon state.
11. The method of claim 2, wherein the coupon storage system enables
customer members to securely store online coupons in personal bins

(called Sacks), which are allocated for their use at a participating portal.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the coupon storage system also provides management functions including, but not limited to deleting expired coupons automatically, personalizing the Sack for trading, receiving and storing coupons.

13. The method of claim 2, wherein the coupon trading system enables members to exchange, barter, sell, or gift coupons to other members.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the coupon trading system enables members to set policies for automatic trading transactions.

15. The method of claim 2, wherein the coupon verification system provides mechanism for verification of coupons.

16. The method of claim 2, wherein the coupon redemption system provides mechanism for redeeming coupons by coupon issuer and redeeming outlets for value associated with the presented coupon.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the coupon redemption system provides mechanism for redeeming coupons with automatic deposit of redeemed cash values into user's bank account.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the redemption system is preceded by enabling Coupon Verification.

19. The method of a Coupon Trading system, wherein electronic coupons can be bought, sold or exchanged for value by parties.